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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 000947

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL KPAL AE

SUBJECT: U.S. ASSISTANCE; HAMAS MEETINGS

REF: STATE 37552

Classified By: DCM Martin Quinn, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On March 11 DCM delivered reftel points on the review of U.S. assistance and our request that UAE not meet with Hamas to MFA Asst U/S Tariq Al Haidan who immediately said that Hamas has not approached the UAE about a visit and the UAE has not invited Hamas.

¶2. (C) Al Haidan pointed out that Hamas leader Khalid Mishal was visiting Riyadh that day and noted in passing that he had met Mishal during his period as UAE ambassador in Damascus. Al Haidan stated that the UAE would pressure Hamas to forswear violence and recognize Israel's right to exist as well as to honor previous agreements. He argued, however, for a 6 month to 1 year period of continued international assistance to the Palestinians so that Hamas could "be given a chance" to change its ways now that it was in power. He offered a strategy by which "the UAE and other Arab friends" would pressure Hamas while the U.S. would urge the Israeli side not to do anything to provoke matters.

¶3. (C) DCM noted the USG was completing its review of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians in the coming week and expected that it would include a sizeable package of humanitarian aid. Al Haidan was pleased to hear this, invoking the familiar UAE mantra that the Emirates preferred to "projectize" its aid rather than write a check.

¶4. (C) Al Haidan theorized that Hamas would, at least for a time, focus on internal governance issues in the Palestinian Authority, leaving President Abbas to manage external political relationships. He said the UAE really wanted to help Abu Mazen to fortify his position. DCM urged coordination with the international donor community about providing assistance.

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